

Member Spotlights #2

Learn more about some of our members by clicking their photo below!



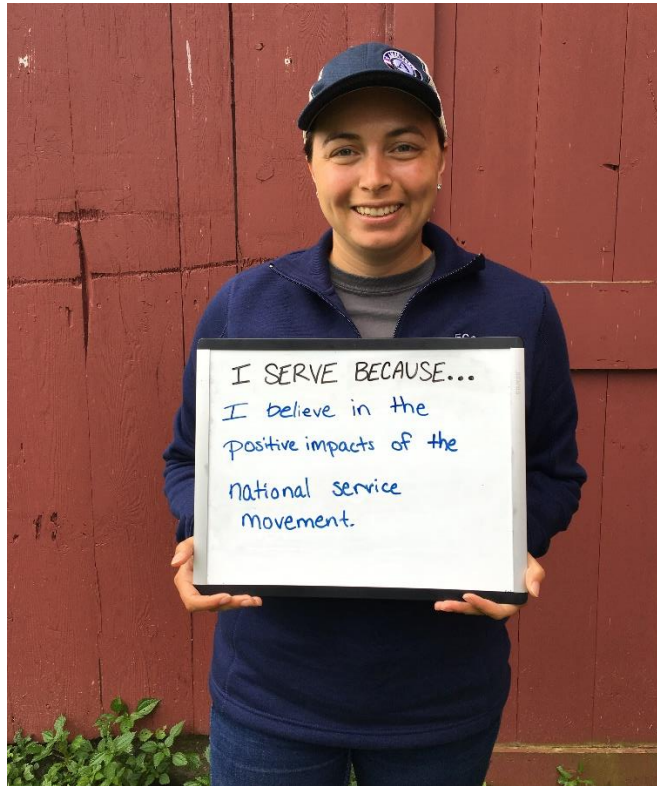
Emily Anderson Member Spotlight



Emily Anderson (she/her) is serving with [Vermont Center for Ecostudies](#) as their Citizen Science Outreach Naturalist. Emily graduated from University of Maine in 2016 with a B.S. in Ecology and Environmental Sciences. While there, her primary focus was in ecological research on a variety of topics including paleoecology, dendrochronology, forest ecology and bat biology. Prior to ECO, she pursued opportunities in sustainability and shark research as well as held positions with the Department of Energy and Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. Returning to Vermont in 2018, she worked with the Vermont Institute of Natural Science as well as completed her master's degree in Environmental Law & Policy at Vermont Law School. Emily has now found herself serving with ECO and serving her community in totally new ways. Her daily service often involves writing blog posts, articles and outreach materials for platforms such as [Field Notes](#) or the [VCE blog](#) as well as for communication with volunteers and for programming purposes. Emily is also busy helping VCE's newest project, the [Vermont Lady Beetle Atlas](#), up and off the ground. She created the project's website and is drafting a protocol for volunteers to follow when surveying, and is helping to plan the [Backyard Lady Beetle Blitz](#) (5/15-5/18). One of the biggest ways Emily has adapted her service was by the addition of iNaturalist webinars she now leads to engage teachers, parents, and community members looking for ways to get involved and get outdoors.

"I serve because I think supporting our local communities and their connection to the land around them is essential for creating environment-conscious changes and fostering human health and happiness. In a time when individual voices often feel unheard, service feels like the loudest way to speak out."

Cassi Carpio's Member Spotlight



Cassi Carpio (she/her) is one of our three returning service members from the 2018-2019 service year. She has continued serving with Friends of Northern Lake Champlain (FNLC) in St. Albans, VT as their Assistant Project Coordinator. Cassi graduated from Michigan Technological University with a B.S. in Environmental Engineering. After college, she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in The Gambia, and then moved to Vermont to begin serving with ECO. At FNLC, Cassi's service varies and due to their small staff numbers tends to be different daily. Somedays you can find her water sampling, monitoring a water quality project or looking at the status of past projects to see if they would need to be restored. One project Cassi has been involved with is their Green Stormwater Infrastructure Project. This project has spanned the entire two years of her service, so she has been able to assist in each stage of its progress. FNLC worked with local schools to design and implement small green infrastructure projects on the school property. While the projects have been implemented, the educational outreach is currently on hold. Currently FNLC is working to create kid-friendly and virtual resources to continue their vital public education and outreach; Cassi is essential in the production of these resources. On top of her still busy daily service, Cassi has been assisting with the 2-1-1 call center and other local clean-ups to ensure her community stays safe and healthy.

Dora Chi Member Spotlight



Dora Chi (she/her) is serving with the [Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District \(CVSWMD\)](#) as their Community Zero Waste Assistant. Originally from the Boston area, Dora graduated from Brandeis University in 2016 with a degree in environmental studies and minoring in political science and journalism. Now, she is pursuing her passion and sharing her love for waste diversion and on how to live a zero-waste lifestyle. In her service, she supports the CVSWMD Outreach team, assisting in the planning and the organizing of program events surrounding waste diversion and the Universal Recycling Law. She also assists the team by creating social media campaigns, designing advertisement fliers, and other outreach tools. This winter, the team dedicated their time to planning out their spring event calendar which unfortunately has been paused due to global current events. Dora is assisting the District explore and brainstorm ways to stay connected to their community through virtual outreach techniques and helping to increase their social media presence. On top of her daily service with CVSWMD, Dora is now providing essential support to her community in Montpelier in light of the COVID-19 crisis. She is taking shifts on the 2-1-1 Call Support Center as well as assisting Good Samaritan Haven in the delivery of meals to the homeless population that have been placed at various motels in the area. She has also just recently begun grocery and medication delivery as well to at-risk members of the community. Dora is dedicated to bettering her community and serves to “empower new generations of eco stewards and is hopeful we can begin building a brighter future together”.

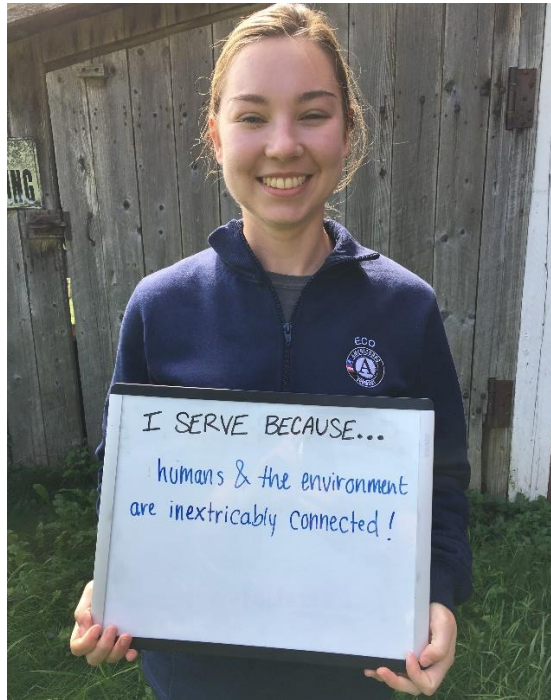
Emma Gwyn Member Spotlight



Emma Gwyn (she/her) graduated from University of Vermont in May 2019 where she majored in Environmental Sciences and minored in Geospatial Technologies. While at UVM, Emma worked for the Spatial Analysis Lab and was a GIS Intern with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Her GIS interest and expertise has transferred into her service as a Field Program Technician with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR). Emma is focusing on a long-term pilot GIS mapping project in which she collects data of all development and infrastructure in the state parks within the Southwest Region. The goal of this project is to use this inventory data to assess the condition of park infrastructure to efficiently and effectively create data reports, as well as continuous improvement. She has already mapped nine of eleven parks so far and will be able to finalize the other two maps this coming field season! Outside of daily service, she has been gaining independent service hours by writing brief summaries for the Vermont DEC's Lake Wise Shoreland Best Management Practices for the Lake Dunmore and Fern Lake Association's newsletter "Catch of the Week". Emma is also one of two of our resident canoeists, and guides wilderness canoe trips in northern Ontario every summer. Although when the lakes and rivers freeze, she happily turns in her canoe for her snowboard. Emma is one of our many members who is willing to travel all over the state to volunteer at fellow ECO's host sites and events and takes advantage of almost any training opportunity that is presented to her.

"I serve because as a person who has been fortunate enough to spend much of my life outside and enjoying nature, I want to help maintain those natural spaces in order to provide others with a similar opportunity."

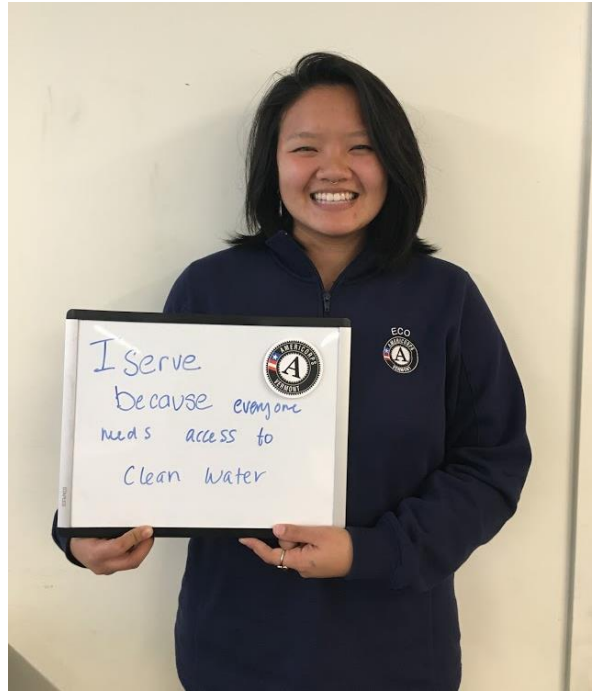
Meaghan Hickey Member Spotlight



Meaghan Hickey (she/her) is serving at the [Lake Champlain Community Sailing Center \(CSC\)](#) in Burlington, VT as the Education and Outreach Coordinator. She graduated from Middlebury College in May 2019 and served an AmeriCorps term the following summer with the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. Her service at CSC consists of educational programming, planning, and facilitating. Her main programming is in the Floating Classrooms lake education program. Through the fall and winter, students in 3rd-6th grade would visit the CSC to participate in environmental science lessons and on how to sail. She would also travel to the schools to teach lessons surrounding water quality, the engineering and design process behind building wind vanes, and tried their hand at making their own weather measuring devices. This was the first year CSC offered Floating Classroom lessons to 3rd graders, and Meaghan designed and planned these plans which included learning about invasive species in the Lake such as zebra mussels, as well as learning about weather by building their own thermometers. In response to COVID-19, Meaghan and CSC has adapted their youth programming to provide a childcare resource for front line workers and families affected by school closures. Their new Spring Adventure Summer Camp is a full day care program that combines science, sailing, and summer camp adventures. Campers will learn about environmental science topics, the physics behind boats and sailing, lake ecology, and will get the opportunity to go out on boats to explore the Lake firsthand.

“I serve because humans and the environment are inextricably connected in an interdependent ecosystem, and it is important to recognize our impact on the environment as well as all the ways we need nature to survive and thrive. Through my service, I hope to help educate local students and provide access to Lake Champlain, so the future generation can appreciate and respect their connection with the environment.”

Grace Jia Member Spotlight



Grace Jia (she/her) started service with ECO this past fall as a part of her third AmeriCorps stint. She formally served through VHCBC as the Summer Field Assistant at [The Nature Conservancy](#) as well as a Summer Naturalist through the [Stowe Land Trust](#). She now is serving with the [Lake Champlain Committee](#) (LCC) in Burlington as their Education & Outreach Coordinator! She has consistently been involved with her community here in Vermont and has volunteered with the National Park Service, ECHO – Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, and the Lake Champlain Basin Program. LCC’s mission is to provide clean and accessible water through science-based advocacy, education, and collaborative action. Grace assists LCC in accomplishing this in many different capacities. These include, creating e-newsletters, reviewing site agreement forms for the annual Lake Champlain Paddlers’ Trail Guidebook, organizing April Stools’ Day events, and writing toolkit manuals for website software to assist with LCC’s communications. Grace’s big project with LCC is to lead the monitoring of cyanobacteria in sites around Burlington. So far in her service she was able to complete 54 cyanobacteria monitoring reports at Oakledge Park to upload to the Vermont Department of Health [Cyanobacteria Tracker](#) and is looking forward to continuing this monitoring this field season. When not serving, Grace loves to cook and to practice her trumpet! Grace serves “because I get to meet new people and serve the community through environmental stewardship and education.”

Ryan Kincaid Member Spotlight



Ryan Kincaid (she/her) is serving as a Habitat Steward with the [Cooperative Invasive Species Management Association for the Batten Kill Watershed](#) (CISMA-BKW). After teaching middle school science in the Finger Lakes region of New York, Ryan moved to Vermont to start her service with ECO to pursue a change and an opportunity to embark on a new career path. Her daily service includes writing invasive plant management plans, researching issues related to native and/or invasive species, writing articles on behalf of CISMA-BKW, or serving in conjunction with [Hildene: The Lincoln Family Home](#). One of Ryan's main projects has been writing an invasive species plant management plan for the Owls Head Town Forest in Dorset, VT. These plans serve as informational guides for landowners and organizations of the invasive species that are present in the area and recommendations on how to correctly manage them. She has also recently started spending some of her time at Hildene, assisting in the creation of their native tree nursery. This new project has inspired her to take some time throughout her day to learn, and practice, tree and native plant identification in the field. Outside of her daily service, Ryan is involved with the local Lions Club, loves to read and write, and pursue her talented creative side. She is also passionate about wildlife rehabilitation and takes any opportunity she can to learn more about the topic or volunteer at animal shelters. This summer, Ryan will continue coordinating presentations and volunteer days within the watershed surrounding the importance of invasive species management and removal.

Ryan serves because: “We are all called to serve others and “give back” in some way. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn new skills while sharing the talents and strengths that I have.”

Eliza Letourneau Member Spotlight



Eliza Letourneau (she/her) is serving with the [Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District](#) in St. Albans, VT as a Conservation Technician. Eliza has returned to her hometown of Monkton after studying and receiving her undergraduate degree at Duke University in North Carolina. During her time at Duke, she was also a member of research team studying the health and environmental impacts of artisanal small-scale gold mining and associated mercury inputs in the Madre de Dios River/region of Peru. Now, Eliza is focusing on soil health and land conservation efforts around Franklin County. Her daily service alternates between office time and field service. When in the field, you can find her taking soil samples or doing surface water monitoring. One of her biggest projects is the state-wide tile drain monitoring study that is run by the Agency of Agriculture. FNRCD manage a small portion of it to contribute, and Eliza coordinates the biweekly sampling and keeps track of the date from the samplings. As her service site moved to remote service, her daily tasks did not vary to drastically and she is able to continue on many of her water quality reports. Luckily, she has still been able to get out in the field to continue her sampling as well as participate in a few socially distanced tree plantings.

“I serve to support the harmony of water quality, land conservation, agriculture, and forested land in Vermont. Vermont is a very land-based both economically and culturally and I believe that all these different aspects of land use and land conservation can be balanced for the benefit of everyone in the state.”

Stephanie Long Member Spotlight



Stephanie Long (she/her) is serving with the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) in Richmond as their Planning and Assessment Assistant. Originally from Traverse City, Michigan, she moved east to transfer to Smith College to pursue a degree in environmental science and policy with a concentration in conservation ecology. Throughout her studies, Stephanie worked as a lab monitor in the spatial analysis lab as well as in an ecophysiology lab focusing on plant competition experiments. She also completed a research project centered around the decline in Eastern Hemlock population due to the invasive Hemlock Woolly Adelgid with the use of drones! Her service in VLT surrounds the implementation of their new restoration program. This program is focused on the improvement of river corridors and water quality around the state. This means Stephanie often finds herself in the field flagging buffers along rivers and streams that run through conserved properties or coordinating tree plantings in recently retired agricultural land within riparian buffer zones to comply with easement restrictions. This past winter, she spent time creating maps for prospective restoration projects with ArcGIS. Since starting tele-service, Stephanie's service has shifted slightly. She expertly crafted a homemade desk out of cardboard boxes and continues to assist projects through the conservation process. She spends much more time talking with landowners and assisting them with necessary paperwork, as well as assuring them that their projects are still progressing despite such uncertain times. As most organizations are, VLT is also making the shift to offering more virtual and online content to communities, and Stephanie is an essential role in navigating that shift!

"Serving with the Vermont Land Trust through the ECO program has been an amazing experience. I have learned so much about land conservation and stewardship while helping provide capacity for my host site to continue carrying out impactful conservation initiatives. I've gotten the opportunity to improve skills I gained in college and use those skills in a real-world context, and through my time with VLT I feel more ready to jump into a career in conservation after my service term ends."

Katherine McCool Member Spotlight



Katherine McCool (she/her) is serving with the [Middlebury Area Land Trust](#) (MALT) as their Lands, Trails, and Education Coordinator. Growing up in northern Virginia, she found her love for the natural environment while exploring the Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah National Park. After graduating from University of Virginia, she wanted to take some time to discover her passions before taking off to pursue graduate school. She found her next step in a quarter-time AmeriCorps position through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and Cross Vermont Trail Association. She spent the next summer building trails in Central Vermont. That fall she joined ECO AmeriCorps to start her full-time service with MALT. Her role is split between education and trail work/conservation. Before the stay at home order, she was teaching outdoor lessons to preschoolers three times a week as well as leading the afterschool program for kids in grades K-2. This spring Katherine also organized and managed their summer camp registration system. Within the first minute of the form opening they had 21 families register and are looking forward to serving almost 75 families this summer! She also helps on trail maintenance on the 19-mile Trail Around Middlebury (TAM), this is a widely used trail system by Addison County residents and she ensures the trail is accessible and stays healthy. Katherine has also been crafting a specific invasive management plan for MALT, she is hoping this project successfully compares different methods of invasive management and determines which is the most feasible for MALT to pursue. Since the stay at home order, Katherine's service has transitioned to offering many online education opportunities. She successfully utilizes MALT's social media pages to reach a wide audience to share natural discoveries and her outdoor adventures. She is also now able to get outside to maintain the survival of the trail which is especially vital now during mud season and a growing, unprecedented usage of the trails!

"I serve because I am aware of my privilege and want to do my part to help others who were not born into circumstances as fortunate as mine. I have occasionally struggled with my position here, because Vermont is one of the most environmentally lucky places in the country; it sometimes seems silly to dedicate so much to a place that is already so fortunate...I've realized that our service is a long-term benefit with results that will likely never be tangibly recognized. Environmental service sets a base for environmental stewardship and protection that can inspire future leaders through nature education, promote clean water that allows millions to avoid health risks, and provide untouched land for non-human uses. We are establishing the groundwork for eternal systems that have the opportunity to touch unimaginable lives."

Ellie Schiappa Member Spotlight



Ellie Schiappa (she/her) is a busy bee who serves as ECO AmeriCorps' Team Leader while also masterfully coordinating communications for the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation! Ellie grew up in a small rural town in Western PA, and graduated from Slippery Rock University in May 2019 with a degree in Environmental Studies & Sustainability and a minor in Communications. After volunteering abroad throughout college, she decided to pursue a domestic service position. Her search led her to the ECO Program, and we're so glad that it did!

Ellie heads up the program's social media and other communication efforts and assists with organizing training sessions, service days, and other events. She also does what she can to keep the members, who are dispersed throughout the state, connected to each other and program staff. On the DEC side of things, she participates in various groups, including the Environmental Justice Committee, Village Wastewater Initiative, DEC Social Media Team, and Cross-Communications Committee. Her various roles and responsibilities enable her to support her fellow ECO members and ensure that everyone is included. As the group switched to a mostly online format this spring due to the pandemic, Ellie has assisted the group in the transition. In addition to keeping things relevant for everyone programmatically, Ellie has responded to the COVID crisis by volunteering with a local organization and delivering meals to individuals who are homeless and others placed in hotels by the state's stay at home order. Lately she has also been pursuing yoga teacher certification, participating in trainings and offering sessions to ECO members and others while we've been serving from home.

She states that the reason she serves is "to connect communities, share their story, and increase access to environmental information and communication. I strive to provide as much support to my community, while ensuring they feel heard & connected to each other," and she has been doing a wonderful job of this! Her positive attitude and proficiency in social media and communications has brought the group closer as a team, and kept things running smoothly, even amidst local and global changes. We know that she will be an asset wherever she chooses to go in the future!

Kevin Tolan Member Spotlight



Kevin Tolan (he/him) is currently serving with the [Vermont Center for Ecostudies](#) (VCE) in Norwich, VT as their Vernal Pool Monitor and Grassland Bird Outreach Coordinator. He grew up in coastal Maine exploring the outdoors, looking for salamanders, and building forts in the woods, and continued his interest in the outdoors while studying at University of Vermont pursuing a degree in Wildlife Biology and a minor in Forestry. He began his service with ECO after graduating in May of 2019 to pursue his passion for environmental stewardship and ecological conservation. At VCE he is the primary coordinator for the [Vermont Vernal Pool Monitoring Project](#) (VPMon) as well as the [New England Grassland Ambassadors](#). Both projects involve the engagement of volunteer citizen scientists across the region to gather data to provide outreach and assistance for landowners and conservation efforts. The important data gathered through these projects also allow Kevin and staff at VCE to provide essential resources to the Vermont community and greater New England region. On his transition to teleservice, Kevin pivoted his outreach events quickly and planned, coordinated, and hosted many online webinars to educate community members on vernal pool ecology and grassland bird conservation. He partnered with multiple conservation organizations to increase their reach and education efforts. Kevin's passion about vernal pools and grassland birds is prevalent in his service and loves to share his fun bird facts. When asked why he serves, Kevin said:

“As humans continue to alter their surroundings land stewardship is as important as ever. Vernal pools have long been underrepresented in wetland inventories due to their ephemeral nature. Through my service I aim to raise awareness of vernal pool conservation through the vernal pool monitoring project, as well as establishing baseline data on vernal pools to detect changes related to land use and climate change. Additionally, by providing landowners with advice on managing their grassland for birds such as Bobolinks I hope to maintain healthy breeding populations of grassland bird species, which are declining rapidly throughout their range.”